



# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

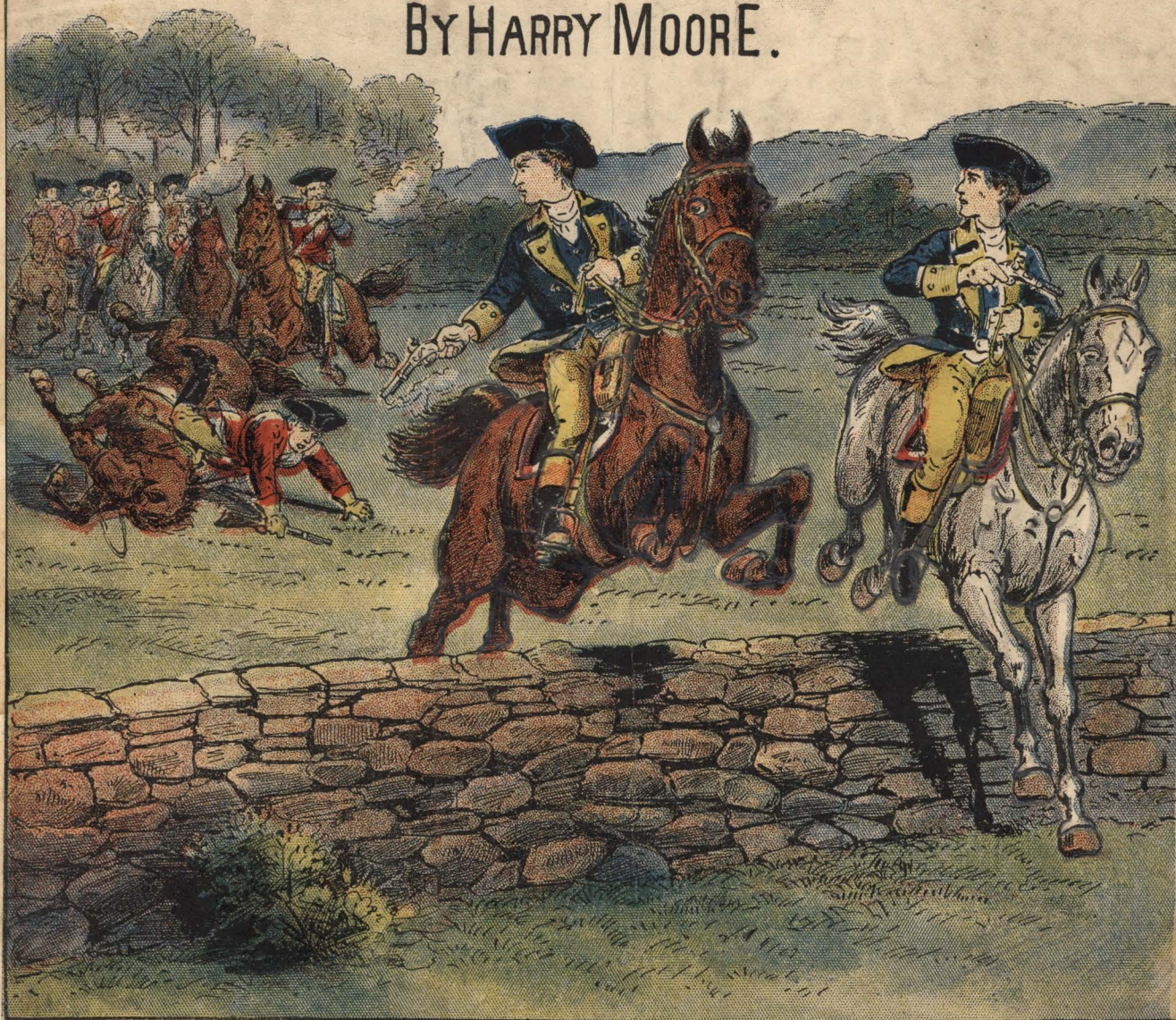
Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year

No. 4.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 25, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS ON HAND; OR ALWAYS IN THE RIGHT PLACE. BY HARRY MOORE.



The redcoats fired upon the boys, but missed. Dick and Bob returned the fire, bringing down the leading redcoat. Then they leaped their horses over the stone wall and rode rapidly away across the field.

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## CHAPTER I.

### TWO AGAINST A DOZEN.

"Now we've got ye, Dick Slater an' Bob Estabrook!"

"Got us to get, you mean, Joe Scroggs!"

On a lonely timber-road a few miles from Tarrytown, N.

, on a bright October morning of the year 1776, a band of

dozen rough, uncouth youths of about eighteen years of

e on an average faced two youths of about the same

e.

The youths were quite different-looking, however.

One would have to travel far to find two handsomer,

re manly-looking young fellows than these same two who

d been addressed as Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook.

Dick and Bob were patriots.

They were enthusiasts in the Great Cause.

So great was their enthusiasm and desire to help in

ing about the freedom of the American people that

ey had gotten up a company of youths of about their

n age from the neighborhood in which they lived, a few

iles from Tarrytown, and at the present time they had

en with the patriot army nearly two months.

They had taken part in several battles, and the "Liberty

ys" had distinguished themselves for dash and bravery

every engagement.

But more important than this, Dick and Bob had dis-

tinguished themselves as spies.

They had done some splendid work in this line.

Dick, especially, had gone over into the British lines

en the army was on Long Island, twice, and had secured

uable information.

As spies they had succeeded where grown men had been

successful, and General Washington was beginning to de-

nd upon them to keep him informed of the intended

vements of the enemy.

At the time of which we write, the patriot army oc-

upied a position at White Plains.

It had fallen back from Harlem Heights, which position

d become untenable, and now occupied a commanding

sition on Chatterton Hill.

The British army was seemingly indisposed to attack the

patriot army, and Dick and Bob had left the camp that morning to visit their folks, who lived not far from Tarrytown. The two families lived within a quarter of a mile of each other, which made it nice for the youths, as they were close together, even when at their homes, visiting.

Dick's family consisted of his mother and sister Edith, who was Bob's sweetheart.

Dick's father had been shot down at his own front gate by a Tory named Hank Scroggs—the father of the youth addressed as Joe Scroggs, who stood in front of the youths now.

Dick, rendered desperate by the murder of his father, had rushed into the house, seized his father's rifle, and, running out, had shot Hank Scroggs, inflicting a death-wound, and, as a matter of course, there was no love lost between Dick and Joe.

Bob's family consisted of his father, mother and sister Alice—who was Dick's sweetheart. So you see there was another bond of sympathy between the two heroic youths who were destined to work, separately and together, to such advantage in the great Cause of Liberty.

The youths with Joe Scroggs were, like himself, sons of Tory parents, and they had of late been taking advantage of the condition of affairs, where neighbors, some Tories and some patriots, were at outs with one another, to do all kinds of mean things to the property of patriot families. They did not try violence to members of the families, save on rare occasions when they met a youth or old man out by himself, however.

The majority of them were cowards at heart.

They would not have thought of stopping Dick and Bob on the road on this morning in question had it not been that they were six to one.

The odds gave them courage, and at Joe Scroggs' suggestion they decided to give the two "rebel" youths a good thrashing.

So, as we have seen, they had leaped out into the road in front of Dick and Bob, who were walking along, talking and laughing, and not thinking of being held up, and Joe had given utterance to the remark which heads this chapter:



"Now we've got ye, Dick Slater an' Bob Estabrook!"

And Dick had promptly replied:

"Got us to get, you mean, Joe Scroggs!"

Dick and Bob had been taken by surprise, but they were not dismayed.

Two braver youths than these two handsome fellows never lived.

They had been tried in battle, and by the terrible dangers which beset the spy in the lines of the enemy.

Hence they were not likely to be frightened when confronted by a gang of cowardly Tory boys.

"Yes, we've got ye," continued Joe Scroggs; "an' we're goin' ter give ye the worst lickin' ye ever hed in all yer life!"

"You are?" remarked Dick, calmly and coolly, but with a look of scorn in his fine eyes.

"We air!"

"That's right, I guess, Dick," remarked Bob, with a grin; "they're mostly 'air!'"

Bob could not resist the opportunity to make a joke.

His words angered the youths greatly.

They were not hard to anger—for the reason that there were a dozen of them.

Had there been only three or four, they would have been slow to anger.

"Ye think yer mighty funny, don't ye, Bob Estabrook!" snarled Joe Scroggs. "Well, ye won't feel so funny by the time we get through with ye!"

"Is that so?" mockingly.

"Yes, that's so!"

"You fellows will oblige us by stepping aside and letting us pass!" said Dick, sternly.

"Oh, ho! hear 'im, fellers!" laughed Joe; "he tells us ter stan' erside an' let 'im pass! Will we do et?"

"I guess we won't do nothin' fur Dick Slater an' Bob Estabrook!" growled another of the Tory boys.

"'Cept ter give 'em a good lickin'."

"Thet's it, edzackly!"

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" remarked Dick, his lips curling with scorn. "So you are going to give us a licking, are you?"

"Thet's whut we're goin' ter do!" growled Joe Scroggs. "Ye killed my dad, ye blamed no 'count rebel!"

"And your father murdered my father, you cowardly Tory!" said Dick, so fiercely as to cause Joe to look frightened in spite of himself. "I killed your father, I know, and I would do it again! He shot my father down in cold blood, and he got no more than he deserved!"

"Thet's your say-so erbout et, uv course; well, yer

goin' ter git pounded ha'f ter death, right now, jes' th same!"

"Who by?—you fellows?"

This was asked with the coolest air imaginable.

"Yes, by us fellers."

"All by yourselves?"

"Oh, ye think yer smart, don't yer? Well, we're goin' ter take some uv thet smartness outer ye!"

"Hadn't you better wait till there are more of you to do it?" asked Dick.

A growl of rage went up from the Tory boys.

"Let's go fur 'em right now!" said one. "Let's don't wait ter heer enny more sass outer 'em!"

"I should advise you not to try it!" said Dick, coldly "you will get hurt if you do!"

"Whut, ye two fellers hurt us?—I guess not! At 'em fellers!"

Joe gave the command, but he did not make the break.

He was the biggest coward in the whole gang.

He was eager to see the two youths whom he hated pounded, but he well knew that somebody would receive some hard knocks, and he did not want to be one of those who did so.

The youths felt confidence in their strength of numbers however, and at the word from Joe, the majority of the youths leaped forward.

They expected to overwhelm the two youths at once.

But they soon found their mistake.

Dick and Bob were both very strong youths.

Moreover they were regular athletes.

In addition, they knew more of the science of self-defense than the majority of men of that period knew.

So when the dozen Tory youths leaped forward to the attack they met with such a reception as they were not expecting.

The two brave youths who were attacked struck out with both fists with such force and precision as to promptly floor four of the members of the attacking party.

Then ensued a lively scrimmage.

Dick and Bob leaped here and there with such wonderful quickness that they were hard to hit.

They were like the Dutchman's flea—when the Tory boys' blows came, the youths were not there.

That is as a general thing.

Of course, some of the blows landed. The youths could not evade or ward off all of them.

But they were usually moving away at the time, and the blows did no great amount of damage.

But the blows delivered by Dick and Bob did not lack steam.



They understood how to add the weight of the body to the blow, and when they landed fairly a Tory boy was sure to go down with a thud.

The patriot youths fought like demons.

They detested the Tory boys, on general principles.

Then, too, they knew them all, and had had trouble with the majority of the members of the attacking party on prior occasions—at school and elsewhere.

So now they went in to settle with the fellows in full.

The Tory youths fought as fiercely as they could, but they were slow beside the two patriot youths, and missed a dozen times where they landed a blow once, whereas Dick and Bob rarely missed.

The combat, which had looked to be so unequal at the start, was rapidly becoming more equal.

Several of the Tory boys had been hit so hard as to daze them.

This put them out of the fight, temporarily at least.

The others were very savage, and fought as hard as they could.

Presently, as Bob turned to strike at a fellow who was trying to hit him from behind, another got a good chance at him, and succeeded in landing a blow that knocked Bob down.

A cry not unlike that given vent to by a wounded panther escaped Dick as he saw his friend go down before the blow of the Tory boy, and from that moment he fought like a veritable demon.

So furiously did he attack the youths that they were forced to act upon the defensive.

It was a wonderful spectacle to see the one youth forcing half a dozen here and there, striking at them so swiftly that it was impossible to keep track of the movements of his fists.

A couple of the Tory boys attempted to leap upon Bob while he was down, with the intention of pounding him, but Dick gave first one, then the other a resounding kick, sending them over onto the ground.

"Up, Bob, old man! Up and at them!" cried Dick. "Give it to the cowards! Knock them silly!"

"All right, Dick!" replied Bob, leaping to his feet, and he went at it again, with a fury scarcely excelled by Dick's, and in spite of all they could do, the Tory boys were pounded all over the road.

They were knocked down as fast as they got within reach of those terrible fists, and then they would scramble up and come again, to be served in the same fashion once more.

It was a lively fight, sure.

And the two youths were, wonderful to relate, getting the better of the fight.

The Tory boys were clumsy as compared to Dick and Bob.

The patriot youths were as quick as lightning, almost.

This aided them, and then they were youths with strong moral courage. They were the kind of youths who would not be whipped.

They would have died before they would have acknowledged themselves beaten by the Tory boys, and the terrible fierce determination of the two awed the others, and they presently became frightened.

They began to realize that the two youths were simply unconquerable, and the realization did a great deal toward defeating them.

They lost heart and courage.

And this is usually more than half of every battle.

The determination to win, to not be beaten, does a great deal toward making a win possible.

And the Tory youths were lacking in this important respect.

The result was that they presently gave way, became demoralized, and, with yell of terror, fled into the timber at the side of the road.

## CHAPTER II.

### DICK AND BOB TO THE RESCUE.

"The cowardly scoundrels!" said Dick, as the last one disappeared from view. "They run like frightened sheep!"

"Well, we gave them more than they bargained for, eh, old man!" laughed Bob, who saw the funny side of everything, and could not help laughing at the youths.

They did indeed cut a comical figure.

Fifteen minutes before, they had boldly announced that they were going to give the two youths a good "lickin'," and now to see them fleeing as if their lives were in danger was amusing, to say the least.

"I guess they were not looking for such a warm reception," said Dick.

"No; they thought that they would have an easy time of it."

"But missed it, for once."

"Yes; I'll bet there is a nice assortment of black eyes and sore jaws in that crowd."

"One of them gave you a pretty good clip, Bob."



"Yes; I'll have a sore jaw for a day or so," and he rubbed his jaw where the blow had landed.

The youths proceeded on their way, now, and had gone perhaps half a mile when they heard a woman's scream.

The scream came from off to one side, in the woods.

"What was that?" cried Bob.

"A woman's voice!" replied Dick, excitedly; come, Bob! some woman is in trouble!"

The youths left the road and darted into the timber.

They ran as rapidly as they could in the direction from which the scream had come.

They had gone perhaps fifty yards when again they heard the shrill, piercing scream of a woman.

The youths leaped forward with renewed energy.

A few moments later they emerged from the timber into an open space of perhaps five acres in extent.

Near the centre of the glade was a log cabin.

The cabin was in flames.

In front of the cabin, dancing wildly about, were half a dozen Indians.

The youths understood it all in an instant.

The British, by specious promises, had got members of some of the Indian tribes to help them in their war against the American colonists.

The Indians were willing to aid the British for the reason that it gave them an excuse to rob, murder and pillage.

True to Indian nature, however, they did this indiscriminately.

The Tory settlers suffered almost as much from the Indians as did the patriots.

And here was a case where the savages were exercising their penchant for murder and pillage in their usual diabolical fashion.

The youths saw that there were enough of the Indians to be more than a match for them in a hand to hand combat, but they did not hesitate.

Their quick wit enabled them to find a way to even up things.

As they leaped into the opening, and the Indians caught sight of them, Dick cried:

"Come on, fellows! Here they are! Hurry up!"

And then he turned his head and looked back, and motioned, as if calling and motioning to others behind him.

The Indians would not have been afraid of the two youths.

But they thought there were a lot more coming, and they gave utterance to frightened whoops, and fled from the spot in a hurry.

Dick and Bob drew their pistols and fired a couple of

shots after the fleeing redskins, which had the effect of hastening their movements.

The Indians quickly reached the farther side of the glade, and disappeared into the timber, and almost at the same instant the youths reached the burning cabin.

On the ground in front of the cabin lay a man, who had been tomahawked and scalped.

On the ground by his side, moaning and rocking her body to and fro, was a woman.

Dick spoke to the poor woman, in gentle, sympathizing tones, and she raised her tear-stained face and looked at the youth with eyes of anguish.

"Oh, my poor husband!" she moaned. "He is dead—murdered! Oh, what shall I do! what shall I do! And my poor boy—they have carried him away! They have carried my boy away!"

The youths were deeply moved.

It was a heart-rending spectacle.

They did all they could to comfort the poor woman, and gradually got the story of the unhappy affair from her.

The Indians had come upon them suddenly, entering the cabin without ceremony, and had tomahawked the man, and then set fire to the cabin, after taking all the provisions and everything else of value that they could find. Then, at the approach of the youths the Indians had fled, taking with them the woman's little three-year-old boy.

This much the youths learned, and then, having found a spade, the youths dug a rude grave and buried the dead man.

Then they told the woman to go to the home of her nearest neighbor, and they would go on the trail of the Indians and try to rescue the baby boy.

It was the promise on the part of the youths to try to rescue the little one that did most to buoy the woman up, and she promised to try to bear up and wait for their return at the home of her neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, who lived half a mile away.

As soon as they had seen the woman safely to the road, the youths returned to the cabin, which was now a mass of ruins, and started on the trail of the Indians.

The youths did not intend trying to follow the exact trail of the Indians.

They knew where the Indian camp was located, and would go straight there.

The camp was a couple of miles distant.

The youths moved forward at a good pace.

They felt sure they would find the little boy at the village.

It would be a difficult and dangerous undertaking to try to get the child away, however.



The youths realized this.

But they did not hesitate.

They felt very sorry for the poor, bereaved woman.

It was terrible to lose her husband, and then to have her child stolen and carried away—that made it doubly hard to bear.

If they could rescue the child and return it to its mother, it would do much to assuage her grief.

They walked onward rapidly.

They were not exercising any particular care.

They had no thought that the Indians might suspect that they would be followed, and make arrangements to surprise their pursuers.

So they were rudely aroused, a few minutes later, when a couple of arrows whistled past them, barely missing Bob.

"Get behind a tree!" cried Dick, leaping behind a large tree as he spoke.

Bob did likewise very promptly.

The narrowness of his escape had apprised him of the fact that it would be dangerous to remain out where the Indians could get a chance at him.

"That was a narrow escape, Bob!" said Dick, as he cautiously peered around the side of the tree in an effort to locate the Indians.

"It was, for a fact!" was the reply. "I wonder how many of the scoundrels there are?"

"There were only two arrows, Bob; so I should judge that only two of the Indians remained behind to watch for pursuers."

"I judge you are right; well, we can get away with two redskins, can't we?"

"We can try, at any rate. They are pretty sly, though, old man. I'd rather have a couple of redcoats for opponents."

"So would I."

The youths had been raised in the woods, almost, and were at home there.

They had seen Indians ever since they were little fellows, too, and were familiar with their methods.

They were well aware that cunning was the Indians' strong point.

What the redskins lacked in open bravery they made up for in cunning and tricks.

Dick knew that the Indians would try some trick, and he was pretty sure he knew what the trick would be.

The red rascals, baffled by their ill success in trying to kill the youths from the ambuscade, would try to slip around and attack them from the rear.

At least, this was what Dick suspected they would try to do.

So after peering around the tree for a few moments, without being able to locate the Indians, Dick decided that it was time for himself and companion to move away from that vicinity.

The Indians had without doubt made note of their location, and were stealing around to take them from the rear.

The youths were not willing to let the Indians work their little scheme.

"We must slip away from here, Bob," said Dick.

"Just what I was thinking, old man," was the reply.

"Those rascals are no doubt slipping around to take us from behind, so we had better move forward."

"That will be as good luck as any, I judge."

"Yes; well, let's move. We will have to be careful, however."

The youths lay down on their faces and began slowly worming their way along over the ground.

Their progress was not swift, but it was perhaps as swift as the progress the Indians were making.

The youths paused frequently and looked around, for they did not wish to be taken by surprise from one side or the other, or from the rear.

After a brief but careful observation they would move on again.

They were skilled at this kind of work.

They had made use of such tactics so frequently when out hunting that it came easy for them.

It is doubtful if the Indians themselves were more skillful at the work.

The youths kept on moving forward, and at the expiration of ten minutes had traversed a distance of a couple of hundred yards.

At this instant a wild yell of surprise and rage came from the point which they had left a few minutes before.

The Indians had slipped around and approached the point from the rear, only to find that their expected prey was not there.

They had been unable to suppress the expression of their rage and astonishment, and the sound of their angry yells was helpful to the youths, as it told them where the Indians were.

"They have discovered that we have escaped them, Bob; and now we had better get out of here lively!" said Dick.

"That's right; lead on, and I will follow, Dick."

Dick leaped to his feet and bounded away through the timber, and Bob followed his example.

They kept on for perhaps twenty minutes longer, and



then the barking of dogs at a point a quarter of a mile away to their right warned them that they were near the Indian camp.

"We'll keep on, and make a half-circuit and approach the village from the other side," said Dick. "It will be safer, I think."

"Yes, I think so, too, Dick."

The youths kept on till they had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile further, and then they bore around to the right, and presently came to a stop.

"What will we do now, Dick?" asked Bob.

"We will reconnoitre, and try to see what is going on," was the reply.

"It will be dangerous work in the daytime," said Bob.

"Yes; but they will think we would be afraid to venture near, and that will make it comparatively safe for us to do so."

"That's true, I guess."

The youths now stole forward.

They took advantage of the cover afforded by bushes and underbrush as much as possible.

Where there were no bushes or underbrush, they kept behind trees.

Presently they could see the tepees of the Indians through the trees.

Now they redoubled their caution.

They dropped upon their faces and wormed their way along, as they had done when escaping from the two Indians a short time before.

Closer and closer they drew, until they were within a hundred yards of the outer edge of the Indian village.

They wormed their way in among some bushes, and lying there, peered out at the scene, which was distinctly typical of Indian life.

Indian warriors were seated here and there smoking pipes, squaws were moving here and there working, while children were playing. Dogs were roving about searching for food.

"Look yonder, Bob," said Dick; "there is the white boy!"

"Yes, there he is!" was the cautious reply.

Sure enough, seated on the ground among a number of Indian children who were amusing themselves in one way or another at the expense of the little "paleface," was the little son of Mrs. Barlow.

"I wish we could get hold of the little fellow!"

"So do I. It will be impossible to do so in the daytime, though, I guess."

"Yes; we'll have to wait till night."

"So we will."

"Yes; and we might as well get away from here. We can't stay here all day."

"That's right; we'll go back a quarter of a mile or so, and take it easy till night, and then we'll try to get the little fellow away from the Indians."

At this instant three or four of the Indians' dogs, which had been running hither and thither, set up a terrible howl and came running straight toward where the boys were concealed.

"They have scented us!" exclaimed Bob; "what shall we do?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### CHASED BY REDSKINS.

A terrible danger menaced the brave youths.

The yelps and howls of the curs as they came rushing toward the bushes in which the boys were hidden had already attracted the attention of the Indians.

A number of the braves had leaped to their feet, while all the others had turned their heads and were looking in the direction of the bushes.

The Indians would investigate at once.

They would wish to see what was in the bushes.

That something was there they would know from the actions of the dogs.

So if they were to escape capture, the youths would have to move quickly.

"Quick! we must get out of here!" said Dick.

The dogs would be upon them in a few moments, and the Indians would not be far behind the dogs.

So there was nothing for it but to leap to their feet and flee.

The Indians might not see them; though it was likely that they would.

Dick and Bob both leaped to their feet at the same instant.

Then they darted away through the timber.

At the same instant the dogs leaped in among the bushes, and as they caught sight of the fleeing youths they gave vent to some terrible yelps and howls.

This aroused the Indians, and a score of them came rushing toward the spot.

The youths, strange to say, were not seen by the Indians.

So the redskins did not know what it was that the dogs had scented out, until they saw the youths' footprints; then,



of course, they knew, and they set out after the youths at a run.

Dick and Bob were running for life, however, and they got over the ground at incredible speed.

The Indians could not possibly move faster than the youths were moving.

So it was not so difficult for the two to keep out of sight of the pursuing redskins.

The dogs were cowardly brutes, and followed only a short distance into the timber.

Then they gave up the chase and returned to the camp.

The warriors kept up the chase, however, for some distance.

That is they went a considerable distance in the direction in which they thought the persons had gone that had been frightened away by the dogs.

They knew from the tracks that the dogs had frightened away human beings, and that there were two of them.

But realizing that to try to follow the tracks would be too slow, they ignored these, and ran forward, blindly, at top speed, in the hope that they might run onto the two palefaces—for they surmised that such the two were.

The youths were familiar with the locality.

And as they ran, they were thinking of where they should go in order to hide till the excitement had blown over.

They knew where, half a mile distant, in a bluff overlooking the Hudson river, there was a cavern.

They had been in the cavern more than once, and felt sure that it would afford them a safe hiding place till night-fall, if they could reach it ahead of their pursuers.

The youths ran as they had never run before.

They knew that the Indians were fleet of foot, and that if they escaped they would have to run very fast.

They cast frequent glances back over their shoulders, but saw nothing of the Indians.

"I guess we're safe now," said Dick, when they had run nearly half a mile, and then they slowed down somewhat and did not run so fast.

Ten minutes later they reached the cavern.

As they entered the cavern, they heard a low, threatening growl.

The growl came from back in the cavern.

They looked in that direction, and saw two fiery eyes.

They gleamed out of the semi-darkness of the cavern in a threatening manner.

"It's a wildcat!" exclaimed Dick, drawing a pistol.

"It's some kind of a wild animal, sure!" said Bob, also drawing a pistol.

"Well, shall we vacate, or shall we drive him out?" asked Dick.

"Let's drive him out."

"All right," and then the youths advanced.

They were cautious, for they knew that a wildcat, if slightly wounded, was a dangerous thing to contend with.

"Maybe we can scare the thing out, without having to fire off our pistols and take the chance of the Indians hearing the reports," said Dick.

"We can try it, anyway; but if the thing comes at me, I'm going to shoot, Indians or no Indians!"

"So am I. Being in the cavern will deaden the sound of the reports considerably."

The youths advanced till quite close to the animal.

It kept growling in a threatening manner.

The youths cocked their pistols.

If the animal failed to become frightened and leave the cavern, then they would shoot.

Suddenly the youths each slapped his left leg with his left hand, and cried out:

"Scat!"

There was a snarling spit, and a dark body shot through the air.

The animal had leaped at the youths, instead of becoming frightened and running.

Both raised their pistols and fired.

They fired so quickly it was impossible to say whether or not they had hit the mark.

A wild shriek went up from the animal, however, which would indicate that it had been hit.

Then it struck Bob before he could get out of the way and knocked him down.

Then with another shriek of rage and pain commingled, the animal leaped away, and, running to the mouth of the cavern, dashed out and ran away.

"Are you hurt, Bob?" cried Dick, hastening to assist his companion to rise.

"No, I guess not, Dick; but I'm scared half to death!"

Bob's tone was so lugubrious that Dick could not help laughing.

"It was enough to scare any one!" he said. "It is no fun to have a big wildcat leap upon a fellow and knock him down."

"I can testify to that fact, Dick!"

"Well, we have possession now."

"And we've earned it, Dick!"

The youths sat down and began talking of the situation and of their plans for rescuing the little boy from the Indians with the coming of night.



They were talking away, when suddenly Bob uttered an exclamation in a low, startled tone of voice.

"What is it, Bob?" asked Dick, taking alarm at once.

"I saw an Indian's face at the opening!"

Just then the faces of half a dozen Indians appeared at the opening of the cavern.

## CHAPTER IV.

### IN THE CAVERN.

The Indians had discovered the cavern, and had no doubt seen the youths' tracks at the entrance.

This would show them that their quarry was within.

The youths sat still and were silent.

They wondered if the Indians had heard them talking.

The redskins peeped into the cavern for a few moments, and it was evident from the expression on their faces that they could not see anything in the gloom within the cavern. On the other hand, the youths could see the Indians plainly.

"Ugh!" grunted one of the redskins, and then in a loud voice he called out:

"White men come out. Not git hurt! We fr'en's. No bad Injuns!"

The youths, however, had only recently had too good evidence that this was false.

They had buried Mr. Barlow, who had been tomahawked and scalped by the scoundrels.

The youths made no reply.

The Indian tried again.

"White men come out!" he called; "you no git hurt! Come out!"

Still the youths maintained silence.

They thought that the Indians might go away if they received no reply to their kind (?) invitation to come out.

But the redskins were in earnest in their desire to get their hands on the white men, and would not give up so easily.

"Ugh!" the Indian grunted, in what was a disappointed and angry tone, as the youths could distinguish, "if white men no want to come out, we have to come in! We want to talk to white men!"

Things were now assuming a serious cast.

The Indians outnumbered the two so greatly that they would not stand much chance in a hand to hand encounter.

So they must stave an encounter off, if such a thing was possible.

Dick and Bob had been in the cavern several times.

They were aware that it was large, and it contained numerous branches which extended back from the main cavern.

They had explored one or two of these branches, just for fun, once or twice, but there were others that they had not entered at all.

They decided to retire into one of the branches off the main cavern, and try to evade the Indians.

They rose to their feet, silently, and stole away toward the rear end of the cavern.

Suddenly Bob stumbled over a stone and fell to the floor with a thump.

The noise was plainly heard by the Indians.

A yell of triumph went up from the rascals.

They were sure of their prey now, and threw all dissembling to the winds.

They rushed into the cavern.

Bob scrambled to his feet, and was jerked into the mouth of one of the branches leading off from the main cavern just as a flight of arrows was discharged by the Indians.

Of course, the Indians could not see the youths, but trusted to luck to enable them to bring their game down.

Dick's actions had foiled them, however.

The Indians came rushing forward, expecting, doubtless, to find the dead bodies of the two palefaces lying on the cavern floor.

Of course, they were disappointed, but Dick and Bob did not stay to enjoy the discomfiture of the redskins.

Instead, they hastened along the passage, feeling their way, as it was quite dark, the light of the outside world not penetrating to where they were at all.

The passage, the youths noticed, sloped gradually upward.

This fact caused a hope to spring into their breasts.

They hoped that the passage might lead to the top of the bluff, and have an exit there.

They knew of such instances.

Suddenly they heard footsteps behind them.

The Indians had found the entrance to the passage they were in, and were following the youths.

At any rate some of the Indians were following them; perhaps not all of them were in the passage.

The youths hoped not.

They paused and listened intently.

They judged by the sound of the footsteps that there were not more than three of the Indians coming behind them.

This relieved their fears somewhat.



They felt that they were a match for three redskins.

Then they moved onward.

They stepped as lightly as possible, so as to not let the Indians hear them.

They felt confident that the redmen did not know they were in the passage, but were simply exploring it, to make sure.

Presently, the footsteps of the Indians coming nearer and nearer, Dick suggested that they step to one side and let their enemies pass them.

Bob agreed to this, and they stepped to one side, and took up their positions in a sort of indenture in the wall.

Standing side by side they held their breath as the Indians approached.

Would the redskins discover their presence? the youths asked themselves.

If they did discover it there would be trouble, for the youths held their pistols in their hands ready to fire them off at a moment's notice.

The redmen passed within six feet of the youths, and failed to discover their presence.

When the Indians had passed on, Dick said in a whisper:

"We had better stay here till they go back. Then we can go on in safety."

"That's the best plan, I think," agreed Bob.

Presently the Indians came back, and passed the youths once more without suspecting their presence.

They were talking in their jargon, which the boys could not understand, of course.

"I wonder if they found an opening at the other end of this passage?" remarked Dick, when the redskins had gotten out of hearing.

"I don't know; we will have to find out whether or not there is one for ourselves, I guess."

"So we will; well, come along."

The youths made their way along the passage, and presently they noticed that it was growing light by degrees.

They began to be able to see objects in the passageway.

"There must be an opening at the end of the passage," said Dick, eagerly. "It is getting lighter and lighter."

"Yes, so it is," agreed Bob.

The youths were delighted by the prospect of getting out of the cavern, and hastened forward.

Soon they reached the entrance to the passage—or rather, the exit, from their point of view.

"We must be careful," cautioned Dick; "there might be some of the redskins around."

"That's so," agreed Bob; "we had better reconnoitre a bit before leaving here."

"Yes; we might run right into a trap."

The youths approached the opening slowly and cautiously.

They peered out, taking care not to expose their faces.

They did not wish to become a mark for the arrows of a score of Indians.

They looked all around, as well as they could without exposing themselves too much.

There seemed to be no place where Indians could be concealed anywhere near, and they made up their minds, presently, that the coast was clear.

Still, they were in no hurry to leave the shelter of the cavern.

They had all the rest of the day before them, and could afford to take their time.

They would take it easy and wait.

It was lucky for them that they so decided.

The nearest timber was distant a hundred yards.

As they stood there, looking cautiously out, a dozen painted redskins stalked out of the timber and came up the slope toward the opening to the cavern.

"Back! quick!" whispered Dick, and the two leaped backward, away from the opening.

## CHAPTER V.

### A TERRIBLE COMBAT.

"I wonder if they belong to the party that chased us into the cavern?" remarked Bob in a low tone.

"I don't know," replied Dick.

"Do you suppose they know of this cavern?"

"Quite likely, Bob."

"Then we had better be getting back in a ways, away from the entrance, don't you think?"

"I judge that we had."

Then the two youths moved back into the passage a distance of fifty or sixty feet.

They were hid from the view of any one at the entrance, now, by the gloom of the cavern.

Here they stopped.

"We'll wait and see what the Indians do," said Dick.

They did so.

Presently they saw the entrance to the passageway darkened.

The Indians were entering.



Without a word, the youths began retreating, slowly and cautiously.

They did not wish to go any further than was necessary.

They were afraid they might run up against the Indians in the main cavern, if they did so.

The Indians entered the passageway, but did not come any further.

They began jabbering in their jargon, and the youths quickly decided that the redskins had entered for the purpose of holding some kind of a council.

They evidently thought they would be free from any chance of being disturbed.

But they missed it this time.

Suddenly Dick and Bob heard footsteps coming along the passage from the rear.

They knew some of the Indians who had chased them into the cavern were coming.

The youths stepped quickly and softly to one side of the passage, and flattened themselves against the rocky wall.

They feared they would be discovered this time.

They hoped for the best, however, and as the Indians drew near the youths held their breath and waited.

The attention of these Indians was attracted at the moment they approached where Dick and Bob were by the voices of the Indians at the mouth of the passage.

This took their attention, and they did not discover the presence of the youths.

They passed Dick and Bob, and stole onward toward the other party of redskins.

The youths supposed, of course, that the Indians all belonged to the same tribe, and were from the same camp.

They were soon undeceived.

The Indians were not from the same tribe and camp.

They were members of different tribes.

More, they were members of tribes that were at enmity with each other.

Here was a fine chance to settle the standing difference that existed.

At least so the Indians who stole past the youths evidently thought, for they slipped up to within a few yards of the party pow-wow-ing at the entrance to the passage, and suddenly leaped forward and attacked them with a fury that was terrible to witness.

The party that had attacked was not so large as the other, but it had taken the other by surprise, which counted for considerable, and had tomahawked a sufficient number of its enemies to even up matters before the party attacked realized what had occurred.

Then ensued a combat that was hair raising in the extreme.

The Indians fought like demons.

They shouted and yelled, too, and the din was terrible to listen to.

The youths watched the combat in appalled silence.

They had never seen two parties of redskins come together in a combat before, and the spectacle was awe-inspiring.

They watched the combat for a few minutes, and then Dick said:

"Let's get away from here, Bob. This is a good chance for us."

They did not care to stay and see the finish of the battle, anyway.

It looked to them as if the two parties of Indians would annihilate each other.

This was satisfactory to them.

It would relieve them of the necessity of keeping out of the way of the Indians.

They moved back along the passage, and presently reached the main cavern.

They had moved slowly and cautiously.

They were afraid that some of the Indians might still be in the main cavern.

So they paused and listened for some time, when they reached the cavern proper.

They heard nothing which would indicate that there were Indians there.

The sounds of the combat at the mouth of the passage could still be heard.

The noise was not nearly so loud as it had been, however.

Probably only a few of the redskins were left to battle with each other.

"Well," said Dick, when they were sure there were no Indians present, "shall we stay in here or go out and take our chances of being seen by some of the red rascals?"

"I think it would be best to stay in here, don't you?" replied Bob.

"I rather think so."

So it was decided to remain in the cavern.

They listened to the sounds of the combat.

The sounds were rather faint, now.

This would indicate that the battle was about over.

Presently the youths heard footsteps coming along the passage toward the main cavern.

They became silent and listened.

Presently two Indians entered the main cavern and walked toward the entrance.

The youths could tell that there were two by the sound of their voices.



Then, when the Indians reached the entrance, the youths saw that their surmise had been correct; there were two.

"Great guns!" whispered Bob; "of all that gang, only two are left!"

"I guess you are right," was the reply.

"Say, they are bad on the fight, aren't they!"

"You are right about that!"

The two Indians left the cavern, and the youths were left in possession.

It was about noon now, and the boys were hungry.

They decided to go hungry, however, rather than take any risks by leaving the cavern to try to secure food.

They could stand it.

The afternoon passed slowly.

To satisfy their curiosity the youths made their way, after a time, to the point where the combat between the two parties of Indians had taken place.

It did not take long for them to be satisfied.

Upon the floor of the passage they counted twenty dead bodies. Of all the Indians who had been engaged in the battle, only two had escaped alive.

The youths did not remain long.

A brief look was enough for them.

They returned to the main cavern.

Here they waited till dark.

Then they emerged from the cavern.

They made their way in the direction of the Indian village.

It was not far, and, as it was not yet late, they took their time.

They knew that they could not do anything toward rescuing the child until later, anyway.

They approached the village cautiously.

They remembered the dogs.

The Indians' curs were keen of scent, and might discover the presence of the youths again.

To guard against this, the youths moved around so that the breeze, what little there was, blew from the village, and toward them.

Here, in the midst of a clump of bushes, the youths took up their position, to wait till an opportunity should come to rescue the white child.

Campfires were burning, here and there, and the scene upon which the youths gazed was a picturesque one.

Near a fire, some forty to fifty feet distant from the bushes in which the youths were concealed, sat the little white boy.

He seemed to have become reconciled to his surroundings, for he was playing with some Indian children and some of the curs.

They watched him with interest.

They were wondering how they were to get hold of him, and get away from the camp in safety.

It would be a difficult and dangerous undertaking.

But the youths were determined to accomplish it.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RESCUE.

The children played here and there, enjoying themselves, seemingly, as much as any children could do.

And Master Barlow, the white boy, seemed to be enjoying himself as well as the rest of them were.

The children ran about, chasing each other, and shouting in glee.

Presently one of the Indian boys got a firebrand out of the fire, and began chasing the rest.

He threatened to burn them, and, of course, they fled at his approach.

He ran toward the little white boy, who, thinking that he was to be burned, gave utterance to cries of fright and ran as fast as his little legs would carry him.

This amused the young rascal with the firebrand, and he kept up the chase.

So long as the white boy was playing with the others and having as much sport as any it was not so interesting, but now that he was frightened it heightened the interest wonderfully, and the Indian boy was greatly pleased.

The little white boy ran around and around, screaming, and presently, on being pressed closely by his tormentor, he darted into the edge of the timber.

Dick and Bob had been watching affairs with interested eyes.

They had hoped for some such occurrence as this.

They had risen to their feet when they saw the little white boy come running toward the bushes, and as he darted in among the trees Dick seized him.

Lifting the little fellow bodily Dick hastened away, followed by Bob.

The Indian boy with the firebrand saw them and set up a yell of astonishment, and went running back toward the fire.

The youths knew they would have to do some good running if they escaped, but they were determined to escape, and they ran as they had never run before.

They had gone a hundred yards, when they heard a wild yell go up from the direction of the village.



"They have just discovered that the little fellow has been rescued," thought Dick.

"They'll be after us now!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes; but we've got a good start."

"We've got a good start, but there's the little fellow to carry!"

This was quite a handicap.

The little fellow was of good size and weight for his age, and to run swiftly and carry him was a difficult feat.

The youths took turns at it, however, and got along at a good rate.

Dick figured it that the Indians would naturally think that the rescuers of the boy would go in the direction of the little fellow's home.

So, with the intention of throwing them off the track, Dick bore away in a direction considerably at variance with this course.

The plan succeeded, for the youths heard no sounds of pursuit after the first yells that had come to their ears.

They went in a roundabout way, which took them nearly two hours longer than it would have taken to go straight to the home of Mr. Wilton, where Mrs. Barlow had gone, but they finally reached there in safety.

Words cannot describe the joy of the mother at having her beloved little one returned to her arms.

She was so delighted that it served to offset the terrible grief which she had been experiencing on account of the death of her husband.

Had not the child been returned to her arms she would undoubtedly have gone mad, but now there was no danger of this happening.

She wept happy tears, and thanked the youths in a voice broken with emotion.

The youths told her not to say a word; that she was welcome, and that they would have done more had it been possible.

Then they took their departure.

It was about a mile to their homes.

They set out for their destination at a goodly pace.

One thing, their folks had not been expecting them, so would not be uneasy on account of their non-arrival.

All the youths hated about the affair was that instead of spending two days and a night at their homes, they would be there only part of a night and a day.

But they did not regret the delay.

They had made a sorrowing mother as happy as she could possibly be made, under the circumstances.

So they were well satisfied.

Presently they were almost to their journey's end.

Dick's home was the one that they would reach first, and as they came near it they heard voices.

The owners of the voices were in the road in front of the house.

The youths paused and listened.

Not being able to understand what was being said, they stole forward until they could hear and understand.

It did not take long to discover what was on the tapis.

The men were British soldiers.

Among them were a few Tories as well.

The youths recognized the voice of Joe Scroggs.

They understood it all.

Joe, smarting over the defeat which himself and companions had that morning experienced at the hands of Dick and Bob, and anxious to "get even" with them, had no doubt hunted up the redcoats, informed them that the youths would be at their home and then got them to come for the purpose of capturing Dick and Bob.

It had, doubtless, not been a difficult matter to get the British soldiers to enter upon the undertaking, as the reputation of the youths as patriot spies was well known. Indeed, General Howe had offered a reward of one hundred pounds to any one who would bring Dick Slater—who was known among the British as "Sam Sly"—and deliver the youth into his hands.

Doubtless the hope of receiving the reward influenced the redcoats not a little.

This was, too, one of the reasons that they were in front of the home of Dick, rather than that of Bob.

Another reason was that Bob's father was known to be a loyal man, and they would not bother him.

The youths listened to the talk of the redcoats and Tories, and were busy at the same time trying to think up some scheme for turning the tables on the fellows.

This was no easy thing to do, for there were twenty of the men at least, and two could hardly hope to put so many to flight.

Of course, Joe Scroggs supposed the youths had come straight on to their homes, after their encounter with himself and companions, and he had no idea that Dick was not in the house.

"What can we do, Dick?" asked Bob.

"I don't know," was the reply. "I guess we will have to remain here and see the scoundrels search the house for me."

"It looks that way."

"Yes; but woe to them if they offer any indignities to my mother or sister!"



"That's right; we'll go for them, if they don't behave themselves, even though there are ten to one against us!"

"That we will!"

The redcoats finally advanced to the house and knocked upon the door.

There was no sound from within, and after waiting for a few moments, they knocked again.

Still there was no response from within, and the redcoats became impatient.

They thumped loudly, and called out:

"Open the door! In the king's name open the door!"

Dick had been thinking rapidly, and a scheme entered his mind which he thought might succeed.

He whispered to Bob to follow him, and they went back down the road a distance of a hundred yards.

Then Dick communicated his plans to Bob.

He was going to pretend that the entire company of "Liberty Boys," was coming up the road, and would give orders to the imaginary company of soldiers. In addition, he and Bob would make all the noise they could, so as to make the redcoats think there were a lot of men coming.

So they went up the road, stamping their feet and making as much noise as they could, and every few moments Dick would say, Forward, men! Forward, 'Liberty Boys!'"

There was perfect silence in front of the house as the youths approached.

They would have given much to know whether or not the redcoats would stand their ground, or whether they would flee, but of course they could not know this, so they kept right on coming, and trusted to good luck.

"I wish we could run onto a crowd of redcoats!" said Dick, in a loud, bold tone as they approached the front yard fence; "we would take them prisoners, and take them back with us when we go back to-morrow!"

"That's right!" responded Bob, in a loud voice.

It is doubtful if the ruse would have succeeded had it not been for Joe Scroggs.

He was such a coward and stood in such awe of Dick and Bob that he was terribly frightened when he heard what he supposed was the entire company of "Liberty Boys" coming. He counseled retreat at once, but the commander of the redcoats did not like to give up the idea of capturing the young patriot spy on whose head there was a price.

When Dick and Bob spoke as they did, however, and said they wished they might run across a body of redcoats, Joe Scroggs gave utterance to an exclamation of fear and fled. His example was contagious, and the next moment the redcoats were running away at full speed.

The youths heard the patter-patter of their flying feet

and gave utterance to as loud yells as they could, and drawing their pistols fired after the fleeing men.

Had the redcoats not been so badly frightened, they would have realized that they were being made the victims of a ruse, for a company of soldiers would certainly have fired more than four shots—which was the number the youths fired.

The redcoats were too badly frightened, and too busy running, to count the shots, however.

Doubtless the four shots sounded like a volley to their excited imaginations.

The youths were well satisfied with the success of their ruse.

Indeed they had good cause to be satisfied.

They had put twenty men to flight, which was considerable to do.

Dick hastened to the door and rapped.

There was no sound from within.

The youth rapped again.

Still there was no sound from within, and Dick called:

"Mother! Edith! Are you in there? It is I—Dick!"

At this, there was a sound from within, and a trembling voice was heard, asking:

"Is it really you, Dick?"

"It is I, mother—and Bob; he's with me. Open the door at once!"

A moment later the door opened and Dick seized his mother in his arms and kissed her.

"I thought you were British soldiers!" said Mrs. Slater; "and Edith and I were frightened nearly to death."

"There were some British and Tories here, mother, but we frightened them away."

"Ah! then we were not mistaken after all?"

"No; they were here, all right!"

Then Dick explained matters to his mother and sister.

Mrs. Slater was afraid the British and Tories would return, and begged the boys to come in the house at once, so she could close the door.

They entered, but told her they did not think there was any danger that their enemies would return.

"They were too badly frightened!" chuckled Bob; "I'll wager they are running yet!"

As it was quite late, being past ordinary bedtime, Dick prevailed on Bob to remain there till morning.

It was not difficult to prevail upon Bob, for he was in love with Dick's sister Edith, and it would be happiness for him merely to be under the same roof with the beautiful girl.



Next day the two youths enjoyed themselves hugely.

Dick and Bob's sister Alice were as much in love with each other as were Bob and Edith, and the two young couple were together most all day.

Of course, they spent a portion of their time with the other folks, and had to answer many questions about war, and how they liked it.

Both youths said they liked it very well, but that they enjoyed doing spy work better than anything else.

It was with regret that they turned their faces toward White Plains that evening.

They would fain have remained much longer, but they felt that they might be needed at headquarters, and they bade their loved ones good-by and started.

A quarter of a mile down the road they met Joe Scroggs.

He frowned and looked frightened when he saw the youths.

They laughed and joked the Tory boy.

"Hello, Joe!" cried Bob; "how are you feeling this evening?"

Joe made no answer.

He gave them all the road and walked onward, looking at the youths out of the corners of his eyes.

Evidently he would have run like a scared rabbit if they had said "Boo!" at him.

Dick leaped in front of Joe, and, pushing the youth back, looked him sternly in the eyes.

"Joe Scroggs," he said in a menacing tone, "last night you were at my mother's house with a lot of British soldiers—don't deny it; I heard and recognized your voice! Now, I have just this to say: If you annoy my mother again, in any way, shape or form, or if you are directly or indirectly to blame for her being worried in any way, I will settle with you! Do you hear? I will settle with you—and you know what that means!"

Dick gave the youth a shake that made his teeth rattle.

"I—I—wo—won't b—bother 'er!" Joe stammered.

"See that you do not! And see to it that you do all you can to keep others from bothering her! I shall hold you responsible for anything that occurs!"

Then Dick stepped aside and let the youth pass.

He took advantage of the opportunity and hastened away as rapidly as he could walk.

"I guess he'll think twice before he tries any more funny business!" cried Bob.

"He'd better!" said Dick.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ON HAND AT THE RIGHT TIME.

When Dick and Bob reached the quarters of the company of "Liberty Boys" on Chatterton Hill, in the edge of White Plains, they found that the main patriot army had moved back a mile and taken up a position on Mount Misery.

A division had been left on Chatterton Hill as an outpost.

"Why did the army retire, I wonder?" asked Dick.

"The British are advancing," replied one of the "Liberty Boys," "and I suppose the commander-in-chief thinks that is a stronger position than this."

"How near is the British army?" asked Bob.

"About a mile away. Look yonder; you can see the reflection of their campfires."

"Yes; I see it."

At this moment an orderly rode into the camp and approached Dick.

"The commander-in-chief desires to see you at headquarters immediately," he said.

"Tell him I will come at once," replied Dick.

"Very well," and the orderly rode away.

"Now, remember, Dick," said Bob; "if there is any dangerous work to be done I want a finger in it!"

"All right; I'll remember, Bob," with a laugh.

Then Dick hastened away and saddled and bridled his horse "Major," a magnificent animal that he had captured from the British a few weeks before.

Then he leaped into the saddle and rode away.

He soon overtook the orderly, and they rode to the main camp together.

The orderly pointed out General Washington's tent, and Dick, after dismounting and tying his horse, made his way thither.

Entering, he was greeted cordially by General Washington.

"I'm glad to see you, Dick," he said; "I have some work for you."

"I am at your service, your excellency," was the youth's quiet reply.

"You are always ready, Dick! Well, that is the way to be."

The commander-in-chief was silent for a few moments and then he said:

"The British army has appeared in front of Chatterton Hill, my boy, and I wish you to go, to-night, and recon-



noitre. I have a plan in my mind, but its execution depends on the numbers and location of the enemy. I wish you to go, learn as nearly as may be the number of the enemy, learn their position, and then return and report to me; and I want this all accomplished before midnight. Can you accomplish it?"

"I can try, your excellency."

"Good! And you will report to me here before midnight?"

"Unless I am dead or a prisoner, sir."

"Very well; I shall expect you. Be careful, and do not take unnecessary chances."

"I shall not. By the way, may I take my friend, Bob Estabrook, with me?"

"He is the youth who was with you when you went down to the city, not long since?"

"Yes, sir."

"Take him along, if you think the two of you can do better work, or will be safer than one."

"Thank you, sir!"

Then Dick saluted and withdrew from the tent.

Remounting his horse, he rode back toward Chatterton Hill.

He was soon there.

He unbridled and unsaddled his horse, and returned to the place where the "Liberty Boys" were quartered.

Bob was eager to know what was in the wind.

Dick told him.

When Bob learned that he was to go, if he wished, he was delighted.

He danced a jig.

"When will we start, Dick?" he asked.

"At once, Bob."

"At once, eh?"

"Yes; I have to report to the commander-in-chief before midnight."

"All right; I'm ready to start."

The youths took a look at the reflection from the camp-fires of the British, so as to know in which direction to go, and then set out.

They walked rapidly down Chatterton Hill, and set out toward the camp of the British.

They had gone perhaps half a mile, when they came to a house situated beside a sort of winding road which they had been following.

There was great excitement of some kind going on at the house, which stood a hundred yards back from the road, and the youths paused and listened.

They heard loud, boisterous voices, and other voices the predominating tone of which seemed to be fear.

"Let's go up there and see what is going on," said Dick.

"You lead the way, old man, and I'll be right with you!" said Bob.

They made their way forward as rapidly as was consistent with caution.

They were soon close to the house.

They shielded their bodies behind trees, and took a look at the scene before them.

The moon was shining brightly and they could see fairly well.

A foraging party of the British, a dozen in number, were at the house.

They had evidently entered the house and seized upon everything in the nature of edibles that they could find.

They had also entered the cellar.

There they had come upon a cask of wine.

The good farmer had made the wine for his use during the winter.

But to judge from present appearances, he would have to do without wine the coming winter.

The redcoats rapidly became drunk, and their demands became greater in the same ratio.

"Have you got any money, you old scoundrel?" asked the redcoat who seemed to be the leader.

"No, no! I have no money!" was the reply.

"That will do to tell!" sneeringly; "I'll wager you have gold hidden around here somewhere."

"No, no! I have no gold!"

"Let's search for it!" suggested another redcoat, and this met with the approval of the rest.

"Come on!" was the cry, and the entire crowd went into the house.

"Oh, my poor wife and daughters will be frightened to death!" the old man moaned, wringing his hands, and he ran after the redcoats, imploring them to come back.

His words had no effect, however.

He might as well have talked to the wind.

"What scoundrels those redcoats are!" said Dick, in a fierce undertone.

"They are, for a fact, Dick."

"I wish we could give them a good scare!"

"So do I! Why can't we?"

At this instant a woman's scream was heard coming from the house.

"Bob, I can't stand that!" said Dick, fiercely; "those drunken fools must not be allowed to frighten the ladies of this house."

"No; think if it were our own folk, Dick!"



"Follow me, and do as I do!" cried Dick, and he leaped toward the open door of the house.

Bob followed.

Dick drew both his pistols.

Bob saw the movement and did likewise.

Then as Dick plunged through the doorway, Bob plunged through after him.

A stairway was in front of them, leading to the upper story.

The youths leaped up these stairs four steps at a time.

"Come on, fellows!" cried Dick, in a loud voice; "come on, my brave 'Liberty Boys,' and we will capture those scoundrelly redcoats!"

"Shoot them—kill them!" roared Bob. "Give them no quarter."

The redcoats were not so drunk that they could not hear and understand.

They were in the hall upstairs, and had just frightened the ladies of the household terribly by stating that they were going to take turns at kissing the young ladies.

But the sound of the footsteps on the stairs and the yells of Dick and Bob caused the redcoats to postpone this pleasing ceremony till some more propitious occasion.

The wine had muddled their heads somewhat, and they were unable to distinguish from the sound of the footsteps that there were not more than two of the enemy, and they fled along the hall like scared rabbits.

The women folks, with good judgment, retired into a room, and closed the door, leaving the hall in possession of the redcoats and their approaching enemies. The old gentleman went into the room with his wife and daughters also.

Dick and Bob were at the top of the stairs by the time the redcoats reached the end of the hall, and to keep the fellows from recovering from their fright, the youths fired a couple of shots.

They did not try to hit the redcoats, but one shot must have taken effect, for one of the rascals gave utterance to a terrible yell.

The next instant there was a crash.

The glass rattled on the floor, and jingled as it was broken into bits.

One of the redcoats had leaped through the window at the end of the hall.

"Give it to them! Don't let them escape!" cried Dick.

"Shoot them full of holes!" supplemented Bob, and the redcoats, thinking they would all be killed if they re-

mained where they were, leaped through the window, one after another, like so many sheep hopping over a fence.

The youths rushed to the end of the hall, and looked out of the window.

The redcoats were piled up in a great, squirming heap.

They were struggling to get to their feet.

They were cursing, too, and using language that would burn things.

They imagined they would be fired upon from the window, and attacked from all sides at once, and they could not get disentangled and to their feet quick enough.

They fairly fought one another.

"There they are!" yelled Dick; "hurry, boys, and get downstairs and around the house and capture the entire gang!"

"We'll get them, all right!" roared Bob, and then the youths jumped up and down on the floor and made it sound like the trampling of many feet.

The redcoats uttered yells of fear and rage.

One by one they got free from the entanglement, and as fast as they did so they ran with all their might toward the clump of timber fifty yards distant.

They did not wait for one another.

It was every fellow for himself, and the Old Nick took the hindmost.

At last all were up and going, and the youths laughed and shook hands with each other.

"That scheme works all right, Bob!" said Dick.

"Yes; we've used the same ruse several times, and it hasn't failed yet."

"I'll wager that those redcoats won't stop running till they reach their camp!"

"I think you are right about that!"

"I don't believe I ever saw a worse frightened gang."

"Nor I."

"That wine they had drunk muddled them, and made them easier to fool."

"That's right; well, they won't drink any more wine to-night."

"Not here, at any rate."

At this moment the door of the room in which the people of the house had taken refuge opened and they appeared in the hall.

The youths advanced to greet them.

The old man held a candle in his hand, and, lifting it up, he looked at the youths, and then back along the hall and forward toward the front.

"Where are the others?" he asked.

"There are no others," smiled Dick.

"What!" the man exclaimed.



"What!" echoed the ladies.

They looked at the youths in wonder.

"Can it be possible?—no, it can't be possible that you two boys should have put a dozen British soldiers to flight!" the man gasped.

"It must have been possible," said Dick, quietly; "there are no others save we two, and the dozen redcoats have flown!"

"It is wonderful!" said the old man's wife.

"Glorious!" murmured a beautiful miss of about seventeen years, gazing upon the two youths with admiring eyes.

"Lovely!" said the other miss, who was about fifteen years of age, and evidently of a sentimental and gushing turn.

The youths laughed, and said it was not much to do.

"We were passing, and heard the noise made by the redcoats," explained Dick, "and made up our minds to see what was going on. We slipped up close, and when we found the scoundrels were drinking we realized that they were likely to do considerable deviltry before they got through, unless checked, so we decided to step in and check them."

"Well, you checked them very effectually," the man said; "and our thanks are due you, and are most heartily tendered."

"Don't say anything about it," smiled Dick. "We are glad to have been the means of ridding you of a gang of dangerous scoundrels."

"That is certainly the right term to apply to them," the old man said; "they are certainly scoundrels, if ever there were any. I will say that from this time on I am a patriot! I have been a loyalist, but will be one no longer. I will not remain loyal to a sovereign who will send such men as those over here to prey upon us!"

Dick took the man's hand and shook it heartily.

"Now you are talking sense!" he said; "stick to that, and I don't think you will ever regret it."

"You boys are patriots, then?"

"Yes; we are from the patriot army, near White Plains."

"And what are you doing over here?"

"I do not mind telling you, now that you have declared yourself as being on the side of Right and Liberty, that we are on our way to spy on the British."

"Ah!"

The girls stared at the youths admiringly.

"Isn't that awfully dangerous work?" asked the woman.

"Oh, yes," replied Dick, "but somebody has to do it, and we rather like the work."

"Do you suppose there is any danger of them scoundrels comin' back?" asked the farmer.

"I hardly think so, sir. I don't believe they will stop short of the British encampment, and I would wager that they will run every step of the way."

"You may be sure of that!" nodded Bob.

All went downstairs now, as the farmer wished to see about his wine cask.

He was afraid the redcoats had left it so that the wine would run out and go to waste.

He found it all right, however, and was greatly relieved.

He invited the youths to drink a glass of wine, but they declined.

"We do not drink any kind of liquor," said Dick, quietly.

The youths said they must be going, and took their departure, the thanks of the entire family ringing in their ears.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

The youths hastened forward.

They had lost half an hour or more and wished to make up the lost time.

They went straight toward the British encampment.

They had no plans outlined.

They would approach the encampment and let circumstances shape their course.

They wished to discover approximately how many men there were in the army.

Any other information that they could get hold of would be thankfully received.

The youths slowed down as they neared the British camp.

They knew there would be pickets out, and they might run into them at any moment.

They stole through the timber as noiselessly as any Indians.

Presently they heard the tramp of the feet of the man on picket duty.

The youths paused and crouched behind trees.

The picket passed within ten feet of them.

He did not suspect their presence there.

A daring scheme came into Dick's mind.

He communicated it to Bob.



His companion thought it would succeed.

He was right in for trying it, anyway.

The more daring and dangerous a thing was the better he liked it.

Dick's plan was to capture the picket, and, after exchanging clothing with him, take his place as picket.

Then when he was relieved of guard duty, which would be before long, he would be in the British lines, and could take stock of everything and doubtless pick up some information as well.

Of course, he knew he would be running grave risks.

His face was known to some of the British soldiers and to a number of the officers.

But he would be dressed in the regulation suit of the British soldier and he would not be scrutinized.

He could keep his face shaded.

Bob suggested that he enter in place of Dick, but the latter would not listen to this.

"No; I'll go in, old man," he said; "you will stay nearby, and if I am captured and fail to come out of the camp before midnight you will go straight to the commander-in-chief and make report of such facts as have come under your observation."

Bob acquiesced in this.

He usually did as Dick wished without demur.

His only reason for wishing to take his friend's place was because of his fear for Dick's safety.

He knew that there was danger that Dick would be recognized, when it would be all up with him.

He would be seized and shot or hung for a spy at once without a doubt.

The youths, having decided what they wished to do, crept closer to the beat of the picket, and, crouching there behind trees, awaited his return.

Soon his footsteps were heard approaching.

He passed Dick, not an arm's length away, and with the leap of a panther the youth was upon him.

Dick's aim was to get the redcoat by the throat and keep him from making an outcry.

In this he was successful.

His fingers encompassed the throat of the British soldier.

Dick put all his strength in the effort, and compressed the throat so tightly that its owner could not utter a sound.

He could not breathe.

He attempted to struggle, but could do nothing, as Bob leaped to Dick's assistance and seized the soldier's wrists.

Dick held on and compressed the windpipe of the redcoat until the fellow sank limp at his feet, and then he quickly stripped the fellow of his outer clothing.

This done he divested himself of his outer clothing and put that of the soldier on.

Then he put his clothing on the soldier and the change was completed.

The redcoat was beginning to show signs of returning consciousness now, and Dick stuffed a kerchief in the fellow's mouth and tied another one over it to keep it in.

This done he was ready for the deception which he proposed practising on the British.

Before taking his post as picket, however, Dick assisted Bob to carry the helpless Briton back a ways, so that he would not be seen by the officer of the guard when the time came to change pickets.

Knowing that the fellow would soon regain consciousness the youths tied his hands securely with a large handkerchief.

Then, with a few words of instruction to his friend, Dick returned to the point where they had effected the capture took up the redcoat's musket and began pacing the beat.

It was slow work, but Dick knew it would not last all ways.

He would be relieved before very long.

Then would come the dangerous part.

Presently the relief men were put on, and Dick made his way boldly into the camp.

One thing he had not thought of until he was making his way into the camp was that he did not know where to go.

Of course, the soldier whom he was impersonating had a certain place to sleep, but where that place was was more than Dick knew.

This bade fair to be a serious matter.

Not knowing where to go, he would be noticed if he went wandering around, and would be suspected probably.

He thought this over as he was entering the camp.

He could not make up his mind as to a course of procedure.

He would have to await developments and trust to luck.

As was only natural, when he was uncertain which way to go Dick walked slowly.

He was in no hurry to get where he would be likely to betray himself.

No matter how slowly he walked, however, he would soon be in the camp.

Luckily the night was quite cool.

It was the latter part of the month of October, and the air was frosty, to say the least.

So Dick had turned up the collar of his coat, and his face was pretty well hidden from view.

The officer of the guard came hurrying along.



"What's the matter, Somers?" he asked, brusquely; "why are you so slow to-night? Usually you are in a hurry to get off your beat and to your bunk."

An inspiration came to Dick.

He had to make some excuse.

Then, too, it was necessary to disguise his voice.

"Got a raging toothache!" he mumbled.

He placed his hand up to his jaw.

"So that's it, is it? Well, I can sympathize with you. You had better get to your bunk and to sleep."

"I couldn't sleep with this tooth aching the way it is! I must keep on my feet and keep going; I couldn't keep still and endure the pain."

"Oh, all right; suit yourself; better put your musket away. You won't want to carry it around with you."

Dick mumbled out something, and the officer went on.

"What's the matter, Somers?" asked a soldier who was sitting in front of a fire, which Dick had approached.

The fellow had taken him for Somers on account of the fact that Dick had come from the direction of Somers' beat. He could not see Dick's face.

"Got a terrible toothache!" mumbled Dick, who was bound to make the deception serve him as much as possible.

So far it had worked very well.

"Got the toothache, eh? It's the cool weather and the night air."

"I guess so. Oh, murder, how it aches!" and Dick stamped his foot on the ground and held his jaw with both hands, the musket resting on the ground and leaning against his body.

"Better get to bed. The tooth'll quit after awhile."

"I hope it will; it wouldn't do any good for me to lie down now; I couldn't stay there. I've got to keep walking."

"Well, put your musket away. You don't want to carry that!"

"No—oh! Say, put my musket away for me, will you? I've got to promenade around."

"All right," and the soldier rose and took the musket, Dick extending it toward him with one hand, and you may be sure Dick, although he turned away with mumbled thanks and started to walk away, kept his eyes on the soldier to see where he put the musket.

Dick knew that wherever the musket was placed his place was near by, and this would give him information of which he was sadly in need.

The soldier placed the musket among a stack near the fire at which he had been sitting, and Dick said to himself:

"He's one of Somers' messmates. Well, I guess I will be able to find my bunk later on if I wish to do so, but now I am going to make use of this fictitious toothache of mine, and make a tour of the camp."

This would be dangerous, but Dick did not hesitate.

He had come there to secure information of the numbers of the enemy, and he was going to secure it at whatever hazard.

He was challenged two or three times by men seated by campfires, and gave the same answer each time that he had a raging toothache and was merely walking to relieve the pain.

Some of the redcoats laughed at him and jested, while others jeered at him. Others still offered advice in regard to what to do for the aching tooth.

Had Dick really had the toothache and done what he was recommended to do to relieve the pain his toothache would either have been cured or he would have been killed.

Dick took everything in good part.

It would not do to show anger.

Indeed, he was not bothered by the badinage of the redcoats.

He was very well satisfied.

He was doing the very thing which he would not have believed an hour before that it would be possible for him to do, viz.: Walk about the camp of the British army boldly, taking a survey of it at his leisure.

So he paid no attention to the jeers and jokes of the soldiers, but pursued his investigations.

He heard some of the redcoats talking, and gathered from their conversation that they were thinking of attacking the patriot army soon.

From all he could hear the attack would be made in a day or two.

"I am glad I have learned that!" thought Dick.

He was walking along looking here and there and sizing up things when suddenly he heard an outcry, and, looking across toward the farther side of the encampment, he saw one of the pickets running into camp.

And with him, as Dick knew by the clothing, was the picket whom he and Bob had captured, and whose clothing he had on.

The redcoat had escaped from Bob!

## CHAPTER IX.

### IN A HOLLOW TREE.

Dick realized that he was in great danger.

If he was captured, it would go hard with him.



He might not be put to death at once, but it would come sooner or later.

But Dick would not be captured if he could help it.

He was in a tight place.

He realized that.

But he did not despair.

He felt that he might escape.

He had been in tight places before and escaped.

Why might he not do so again?

What should he do?

Dick asked himself this question.

Upon its answer depended much.

If he was to escape he must do something and do it quickly.

There would be no time for extensive planning.

He would have to act on the instant, as it were.

He felt that it would not do to start to run.

Some of the redcoats would at once suspect him and he would be either captured or shot.

It would be impossible to run the gauntlet of all these thousands of soldiers and escape.

If there had been a comparatively small party of the British he might have made a dash and escaped.

But there were thousands of the redcoats, and they were upon every side of him.

So he must try some other plan.

But what?

That was the question.

It seemed as if there could be no escape.

Dick looked all around him.

The attention of the redcoats was attracted to the two men who were running into the camp calling out something about "spies."

The youth's attention was attracted to a large tree near by.

The tree was a monster.

At the bottom was a large opening.

The tree was hollow.

Instantly a thought struck Dick.

He might hide in the hollow tree.

Of course, he was not sure that he could enter the tree unseen.

Nor was he at all certain that even if he succeeded in doing this he would escape detection later on.

The entire army would be looking for him in a few moments.

And some peering soldier would without a doubt investigate the hollow tree.

However, it was the only chance.

So Dick made up his mind to take it.

He moved quietly and unostentatiously toward the tree. He made a half-circle and approached the tree from the other side.

When he reached the giant of the forest he paused and glanced all around.

The eyes of the soldiers were on the two pickets.

Many men had run out to meet the two to learn what the excitement was about.

This occasioned considerable interest in the minds of the spectators.

The result was that Dick was enabled to slip into the hollow tree without being seen.

At least he did not think he had been seen.

It was quite dark within the tree.

The youth knew he would not be seen by any one unless a light was made use of.

He bent down and looked out.

He noted that the excitement was increasing if any thing.

He heard the redcoats calling to one another.

They were asking what had become of the soldier with the "toothache."

Men were running hither and thither looking for this individual.

It was known, now, that the fellow in question was the patriot spy.

Search was being made for him.

Every soldier in the camp was on the lookout for Dick.

And in this moment, when he was in imminent peril, Dick's thoughts were not of himself.

They were of Bob.

Where was Bob?

Was he a prisoner?

Dick feared so.

How else had the picket got free?

He could not have freed himself.

He must have been found by some of the soldiers and freed.

And doubtless Bob had been captured.

He might have escaped, however.

Bob was clever and slippery.

He was always on the alert, and if there was a chance at all he would have taken it.

Dick hoped his friend had escaped capture.

Then Dick's mind reverted to himself and his immediate surroundings.

The soldiers were running here and there looking everywhere for the fellow with the "toothache."

Dick could hear what was said by many of them in the vicinity.



they could not understand where the youth could have appeared to so suddenly.

They discussed the matter in tones of wonder.

They say the fellow is Sam Sly, the boy spy," Dick and one redcoat say.

Well, if it is him he is well named," said another; "he's certainly sly enough!"

You're right about that! It would take a sly one to get out of view so suddenly."

It is the most mysterious thing I ever knew of!" from another. "I wouldn't have believed it possible that a man could have disappeared so suddenly and completely."

Well, he's the fellow who can do it, all right!" decided another.

He's a bold one, isn't he—to come right into our camp by the way he did!"

Oh, he's bold enough. They say he even entered the quarters of General Howe, when our army was over on Long Island, and slipped into the very room in which Generals Howe, Clinton and others were, and hid in a closet and overheard what they were saying. And then when he was discovered he fought his way out and escaped! He's a bold one!"

He must be!"

He must know how to make himself invisible," said another.

He can come as near it as the next one, you can be sure of that!"

The soldiers had no idea the subject of their remarks was within twenty yards of them, hearing everything that was said.

Dick wondered if he would escape detection in the hollow tree.

He feared that he would sooner or later be discovered.

It would be too much to expect that he would be so fortunate, but still he might escape detection.

When he could later on slip out, after the soldiers had all gone to sleep, and make his escape.

Dick hoped for the best.

Still he was sensible, and was prepared to not be surprised at anything.

The camp was in an uproar.

The soldiers seemed to become more and more excited.

They hunted energetically for the boy spy.

They were confident that he could not have escaped and disappeared away.

They were sure he was still within the confines of the encampment.

And they were determined to find him.

They were all the more eager for the reason that they knew there was a price on Dick's head, and each man believed that if he found the spy he would receive the one hundred pounds reward offered by General Howe.

Hence the eagerness with which they searched.

Dick, crouching in the hollow tree, watched the redcoats with interest.

They were swarming here and there like great swarms of bees.

When they had searched half an hour or so without success the redcoats began to get discouraged.

They stopped rushing around and gathered in groups to discuss the affair.

It was evident that they could not understand how it was that the spy had managed to escape.

His disappearance was a mystery.

A group was standing within fifty feet of the tree talking the matter over.

They could not decide in their minds how the young "rebel" had managed it, and one remarked that perhaps the youth had climbed a tree.

All began looking up at the surrounding treetops.

"By Jove! that isn't a bad thought!" said one; "maybe that is where he is?"

"There's a hollow tree," laughed another; "maybe he is in there."

He pointed toward the tree in which Dick was at that moment crouching.

The others looked directly at the opening, and another said:

"Let's see, anyway. Such a thing might be as that he had taken refuge in there."

Dick realized that he was in imminent danger of being discovered.

The soldier would undoubtedly take a look into the hollow tree.

Then he would be discovered.

This would be after the fashion of a rat being caught in a trap.

Dick did not intend to be caught if he could help it.

He stood up and reached up with his hands.

He felt about.

He discovered that the tree was hollow as high up as he could reach, but the hollow was smaller at a point four or five feet from the bottom.

The hollow at the bottom where he then was was at least four feet in diameter.

At a point two feet above his head the opening was not more than two feet in diameter.

Dick felt around with eager fingers.



There were numerous rough places and projections at the sides of the opening, and the youth thought it possible that he could draw himself up and sustain himself there.

It was worth trying, anyway.

He heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

The redcoats were approaching the tree to investigate, as they had said they were going to do.

If he escaped discovery he would have to act quickly.

Dick at once exerted all his strength, and drew himself up inside the hollow tree.

He doubled up his legs and placed his back and knees against the sides of the tree.

He was enabled to hold himself from dropping back.

Reaching up he got a new hold, and again he pulled himself up, and again he braced his back and knees against the walls of the tree and held himself there.

At this instant he heard voices at the opening to the hollow tree.

The voices sounded as if right beside him.

"It's dark as Erebus in there!" said one voice.

"Go in and feel around," suggested another.

"Yes, and get six inches of cold steel under the fifth rib!" was the retort. "I beg to be excused. You go in!"

"Why, I'm not afraid to do so. The fellow wouldn't dare knife any one. It would be to sign his own death warrant. He would not dare offer resistance."

"All right; go in, then, if that is the way you reason. I am willing you should do it!"

"Very well; I will do so, and if Sam Sly, the rebel spy, is in there I am to have the hundred pounds for effecting his capture."

"We agree to that," was the reply; "go ahead."

Evidently the speaker did not believe the patriot youth was in the hollow tree.

Still he did not care to take the chances of entering and feeling around for the youth.

Dick next heard a noise as of some one entering the hollow tree.

"The fellow is going to make his word good," thought Dick; "well, I hope he won't take it into his head to feel up in the opening above his head. I'm afraid I am not beyond his reach."

Dick heard the fellow fumbling around below him, and then an instant later the fellow said to his companions:

"There's nobody in here!"

"Are you counting yourself?" asked one redcoat, with a laugh.

"Oh, you're too smart!" was the angry retort.

"Feel above your head," suggested another; "he may have climbed up inside the tree."

This was what Dick had feared.

If the fellow felt up inside the tree he would be certain to discover the youth's presence there.

Dick reached up and got a good hold on a couple of projections.

He was going to draw himself up still higher, but then he thought that he had not acted quickly enough.

For at that instant he felt the hand of the redcoat catching his left ankle.

## CHAPTER X.

### A NEAT TRICK.

Dick was desperate.

He gave a fierce kick and wrench, and got his foot free.

Then he pulled himself up out of reach of the men below.

At the same instant the fellow set up a terrible yell of triumph.

"I've found him!" he shouted; "I've got him! He's in here!"

All was excitement at once.

The word went out, and although Dick could not see out, he could hear, and he realized that the redcoats were flocking to the spot in droves.

"I guess it is all up with me!" thought Dick, ruefully. "Oh, if I had only climbed up a little higher before the low came into the tree!"

But he had not done so, and now he would have to face the consequences.

Dick was not the youth to cry over spilled milk.

Finding that he could do so he kept on climbing up, and soon was twenty feet above the ground.

Meantime the excitement had grown below.

Hundreds of soldiers had flocked to the spot as soon as they heard that the rebel spy had been "treed."

The fellow within the tree now yelled up to Dick:

"Come down from there! Come down at once! You can't get away, and might as well give up!"

Dick made no reply.

"Maybe he will think he was mistaken after all," thought Dick.

There was not much hope of this, however.

The fellow had got hold of Dick's ankle, and was sure to win his game.



"Come down!" he yelled; "come down at once, or I will be upon you!"

"No, no! don't fire!" Dick heard a voice say; "we must capture him! The scoundrel must be hanged, not shot!" Dick recognized the voice.

It was that of Captain Frink, an enemy of his. Dick had had an encounter with the captain over on Long Island, when he was over there on a spying expedition, and had shot the captain in the cheek.

Captain Frink was anxious to get revenge, and doubtless it that to stand by and watch the youth strangle to death at the end of a rope would be the best revenge he could secure.

"How'll we get him down, then?" the soldier asked.

"Smoke him out!" some one suggested.

"A good scheme!" the captain said. "Bring some leaves and dead branches of trees. We'll have him dropping down from his perch like a chicken that has had burning sulphur stuck under its nose."

"The scoundrels!" thought Dick; "I guess they've got now!"

He made up his mind he would not go down till he had the opportunity, however, and he quietly worked his way up higher.

Presently he heard the captain's voice:

"Come down out of there, Sam Sly!" came the words; "come down, or we will set fire to this pile of leaves and smoke you out!"

Dick adhered to his rule of maintaining silence.

He thought that perhaps the redcoats might think after a while that the fellow had been mistaken after all, and that there was no one in the tree.

There was only a faint hope, but it was better than nothing.

Dick believed in making the most of everything.

He answered them once they would know absolutely and all dispute that he was in the tree; if he maintained absolute silence a doubt might creep in. Then, if he could stand the smoke, he might be able to escape after all.

The British captain waited a few moments, and then, receiving no answer, he muttered something which sounded like an oath, and cried out:

"All right! We'll set fire to this stuff and see if we can smoke you out!"

And if that doesn't do it we'll set fire to the old tree and roast you out!" cried another voice.

The tree was a mere shell at the bottom and was already dead it would undoubtedly burn if set fire to, and Dick shuddered as he thought of this being done.

That the redcoats were capable of putting their threat into execution he did not doubt.

They would think it great sport to roast him out.

"All right!" Dick murmured, setting his teeth hard; "set fire to the tree if you like! I'll not come out of here until I absolutely have to do so!"

There was the sound of flint striking against steel, and presently the youth saw a tiny blaze starting up, far below him.

He was about twenty-five feet above the ground now, and he began climbing still higher.

"Maybe the fire will refuse to burn, and not smoke much, after all," he thought.

The blaze grew larger, however, and presently the smoke began to reach the youth.

It was with difficulty that he could keep from sneezing.

This would have been a clear give away, however, so he fought off the desire to sneeze.

Dick set his teeth and climbed higher.

"If I have to drop I might as well drop a good ways!" he said to himself; "I'll go as high as I can, brace myself as best I can and hold on as long as I can!"

This was characteristic of Dick Slater, the boy spy.

His courage was of a high order.

It was something more than "bulldog" courage.

It was strong moral courage.

He was gifted in this way to a greater degree than most persons.

He climbed higher and higher still.

The opening was now just about large enough to admit his body, and that was all.

He could not go much higher.

And now suddenly Dick made a discovery.

It was a pleasing one, too.

He had reached a point where there was a large hole in the side of the tree.

Dick felt around the edges of the hole and was delighted to find that it was easily large enough to admit of the passage of his body through it.

But the immediate beauty of the thing was that it would nullify the efforts of the redcoats to smoke him down.

He could stick his head out through the hole and breathe fresh air, while the enemy below was fondly imagining that the youth was being choked into insensibility by the smoke.

"This is all right!" Dick murmured. "Now let my friends, the enemy, smoke me out if they can!"

He stuck his head cautiously out through the hole.

He was afraid that he might be seen.

He soon discovered that there was no danger of this, however.

There were limbs and branches below, between himself and the ground.



Then it was dark enough so that the redcoats could not see him, he was sure, even if they were to look up.

He felt safe, so far as that was concerned.

But he did not for a moment forget that he was in a bad predicament.

He felt that his chances for making his escape were few.

The smoke soon began pouring out through the hole.

With his head outside, Dick was enabled to breathe easily, however, and he did not mind the smoke.

His body would be well smoked, but he could stand that.

Dick could see the redcoats below him.

The reflection from the fire in the hollow of the tree was thrown upon them.

He could hear them talking, and could understand much that was said.

The consensus of opinion was that the rebel spy would soon come toppling down, but as the minutes passed and this did not happen their views changed.

"You must be mistaken about the fellow being up there," Dick heard Captain Frink say. "He could never stand that smoke this long."

"I'd bet my life that I had him by the ankle!" the soldier declared. "I know he is up there!"

"Then why doesn't he come down or fall down? The smoke is thick enough to cut with a knife. He could not have stayed up there so long as this."

"I know he is there!" was the dogged reply.

"I wonder what they will do next?" thought Dick. "The smoke scheme has failed; I wonder if they will give it up?"

He hoped that they would.

He feared they would not, however.

And in this he was correct.

The redcoats, on finding that the smoke scheme would not work, had begun discussing other means.

The soldier who had got Dick by the ankle reiterated his statement that the rebel spy was up inside the tree, and after some talk on the subject, it was decided to chop the tree down.

A couple of axes were procured, and two men began chopping.

Dick's heart sank as he heard the resounding blows of the axes.

He was at least thirty feet from the ground, and a fall that distance would be anything but pleasant.

Of course, the projecting limbs would break the force of the fall considerably, but even then it would be apt to jar him more or less severely.

Dick could do nothing, however, save wait for the inevitable fall.

He could not make the redcoats stop chopping.

He was in for it.

"It won't take them long to chop the tree down," thought Dick; "it is a mere shell, and will soon give way."

Ten minutes from the time the men began work Dick could feel the tree swaying gently back and forth.

"I guess I had better get my head back inside the tree," he murmured; "it might get tucked under the tree when it strikes, and that wouldn't be pleasant!"

The tree began to sway more than ever.

"It will go pretty soon!" Dick thought; "well, I can help it, and since it must go I wish it would hurry. There is somewhat of a strain on the nerves!"

The strain was soon to be removed, for a few moments later the tree started to fall.

There was a cracking sound made by the breaking of a portion that had not been cut by the axes, and then downward, slowly and majestically, moved the giant of the forest.

Dick clenched his teeth and braced himself.

He thought it possible that he might be knocked senseless by the terrible jolt.

But the tree did not reach the ground—at least, not just then.

Instead, it fell against another tree nearly as large as itself, and lodged there.

Dick drew a breath of relief.

The redcoats, who had shouted with delight when the tree started, now yelled in rage and disappointment.

Reaching out through the hole Dick felt a large limb.

A thought struck him.

Might he not crawl out through the hole, and when the tree became dislodged and fell on down to the ground might he not remain in the other tree?

If he could do this it would be a neat trick to play on the redcoats, and would be the means of puzzling them still further.

Especially would the redcoat who had got him by the ankle be nonplussed.

Dick decided to try the plan, anyway.

He made his way slowly and carefully through the hole and out upon the limb of the other tree.

He had not much more than done so when the hollow tree became dislodged and went on down to the ground, with crash and roar that could have been heard for a mile.

"Now, I wonder what that redcoat will think?" thought Dick. "They will search the tree for me, and failing to find me, the majority will believe the fellow was not taken."

When the tree fell to the ground the redcoats set up a yell of delight.



"Now we've got him!" said Captain Frink, gleefully; "with the smoking, and the jar of the fall additional, I expect him to be hardly worth finding. However, he isn't dead, he ought to be!"

"Oh, he's too tough, captain; this hasn't phased him, may be sure!" said a soldier.

Captain Frink stooped down and peered into the end of the hollow tree.

"Come out!" he called; "come out at once, or we will be in there and drag you out!"

Of course there was no reply.

"Who'll go in there and pull the stubborn rascal out?"

Asked the captain, looking around at the soldiers.

"I'll go," said the soldier who had entered the tree in the first place, and who had got hold of Dick's ankle; "I'll pull him out of there in less than no time, and prove to you that I was right about his being there."

"Go ahead!" said Captain Frink.

The fellow stooped and entered the hollow tree.

He crawled along on his hands and knees, occasionally trying to reach out in front of him.

He was expecting every moment to get hold of Dick, but was disappointed.

He made his way along the hollow trunk clear to the other end—to where the hollow was so small it would not have admitted the body of a youth of Dick's size, and the redcoat worked his way back out, a puzzled and disappointed man.

There was only one thing the fellow could think of that would afford a solution of the problem of what had become of the rebel spy: That was the hole in the tree which he had discovered. The youth might have crawled out through this, he thought, and might be at that very moment making his way through the timber.

He told Captain Frink this, and all rushed to where the hole was and looked at it.

They saw that it was large enough to permit the passage of a human body, and they decided that the soldier's idea was the correct one: The rebel spy had crawled through the hole and made off through the timber.

They scattered and began to search for the supposed rebel spy, at once.

Meanwhile Dick was seated on a limb of the tree where he had lodged against, taking matters as coolly as possible under the circumstances.

It was hardly for him no one thought of such a thing as that he had crawled out through the hole in the hollow tree when he had lodged against the other, and that he had taken refuge there.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUSION.

The redcoats hunted everywhere.

They scoured the timber for half a mile around.

They searched faithfully for the rebel spy.

But of course they did not find him.

Dick, from his lofty perch, watched the proceedings as well as he could, and was glad that he had fared as well as he had.

"Barring some stroke of ill luck I shall escape them yet!" he thought.

At last the British soldiers gave up the search.

They were forced to acknowledge that the boy spy had outwitted them and escaped.

And that, too, when they were sure he was in their power.

They were greatly chagrined.

Captain Frink was wild with anger.

Again had his youthful enemy, on whom he had sworn revenge, escaped him.

"But I'll get him yet, and see him hang for the traitor and spy that he is!" he exclaimed fiercely.

Gradually the British army quieted down.

The soldiers returned to their bunks, and presently the camp was quiet and silent.

Dick was in no hurry to come down out of the tree.

He did not wish to risk being captured by being in too big a hurry to escape.

It was worth enduring the inconvenience of being perched in the treetop for a couple of hours to in the end secure his liberty.

He suspected that there would be some redcoats on the lookout for an hour or so, in hope that they might get their eyes on the youth, if he was still within the confines of the camp, and tried to escape.

So Dick made up his mind to fool them, and waited patiently.

It must have been near midnight when he decided to descend and make the attempt to slip away.

He began the descent at once.

He moved downward very slowly.

He did not know but there might be redcoats hidden in the vicinity, and he did not wish to attract their attention.

At last he reached the ground, and as his feet touched the earth a sigh of relief escaped him.

At the same instant he felt himself seized by strong hands.



A redcoat who had been placed on watch had seen Dick just as he reached the ground, and had reached out and seized him without a word.

The redcoat was a stout fellow.

He thought he would have no difficulty in holding the youth.

So he made no outcry; did not yell for help.

He would make the youth a prisoner, and then appear with him in triumph.

This was where he made his mistake.

Dick was more powerful than most men—was stronger than the man who had hold of him.

Then, too, he was desperate.

To be captured now, after having made such wonderful efforts to escape, would be terrible.

He was determined that he would not be made a prisoner.

Whirling quickly, he seized the redcoat by the throat with both hands.

Calling up all his strength, he compressed the throat of the soldier as tightly as he could.

The man gasped and gurgled.

He struggled, and tried to loosen Dick's grip.

In vain; he could not do it.

He could not get his breath.

The result was that in a very short time he was choked into insensibility.

Then Dick drew another long breath, and looked around to see if the struggle had attracted the attention of any one.

He saw nothing to indicate that it had done so.

"I guess I am free to leave the encampment at last!" he thought. "Well, I will lose no time in doing so!"

With another glance around he stole away into the timber.

He moved slowly and cautiously, pausing frequently to listen, for he did not know but he might run onto a redcoat at any moment.

He was fortunate, however, and did not encounter any more British soldiers.

At last he was at what he considered was a safe distance, and then he thought of Bob.

"I will signal him, and if he is anywhere around here, he will answer the signal," thought Dick.

Then he gave the call of a night bird.

He listened eagerly, and from off toward the right he heard a reply to his signal.

"It is Bob, and he is free!" murmured Dick.

Then he hastened in the direction from which the signal had sounded.

He repeated the signal frequently, and was guided by replies.

Ten minutes later Dick and Bob met, and to see how they were delighted is stating it mildly.

They seized each other, and indulged in a bear-like hug.

"How did that picket manage to get free and get away from you, Bob?" asked Dick.

"I hardly know, myself," Bob replied; "all I know is that he was free, and had leaped upon me before I knew what was happening. I struggled with him, and he would not let me go to the picket. I heard the picket coming and managed to break the fellow's hold and get away."

Then Dick related his adventures since entering the camp.

"And your troubles were all caused by my carelessness in not keeping my eyes on the prisoner!" said Bob, smiling.

"Oh, that is all right," said Dick; "you couldn't have done it."

"What are we going to do next?" asked Bob, pressing the matter after a little further conversation.

"I guess we had better start for camp at once."

"That's right; we were to report to the commander-in-chief by midnight, weren't we?"

"Yes; but we won't be able to do it."

"No, it will be two o'clock before we can reach the commander-in-chief's headquarters."

"Well, we will get there as quickly as we can. In the morning, I was enabled to make a good estimate of the number of troops in the British encampment, and General Vinton will be glad to receive the information."

"Even if it is a little late in reaching him, eh?"

"Yes."

The youths set out and walked as rapidly as they could.

Half an hour later they reached the American outposts on Chatterton Hill.

They were challenged by the sentry, gave the countersign, and made their way to their quarters.

They quickly saddled and bridled their horses, mounted, and rode away in the direction of the point where the commander-in-chief and the main army had taken up their position.

It was only a little more than a mile distant.

They were soon at their destination.

It was nearly two o'clock.

The commander-in-chief had retired to his bunk, but he had left orders with his orderly to awaken him if the boys returned at any time during the night, so the order



wakened General Washington as soon as Dick and Bob arrived.

"You are a little late," remarked the commander-in-chief, when Dick and Bob entered his tent.

"Yes, your excellency," replied Dick; "it was impossible to get here sooner," and then he told his story in few words. He imparted to the general the information which he had ascertained relative to the number of troops in the British encampment, and the commander-in-chief seemed greatly pleased to receive it.

He complimented the youths on the work they had performed, and after a little further conversation, the youths bade adieu and withdrew.

They rode back to their quarters on Chatterton Hill, and after unbridling and unsaddling their horses and picketing them, they went to their quarters and turned in.

They were asleep as soon as they touched their blankets, and slept soundly till morning.

They were up as early as anybody next morning, and, after breakfast, they went out on a scouting expedition at the suggestion of Captain Hamilton.

They penetrated to within a third of a mile of the British lines, and Dick climbed a tree and took a survey of the encampment.

He soon made a startling discovery.

He descended from the tree in hot haste.

"The redcoats are advancing!" he cried to Bob; "they are moving forward to attack the force on Chatterton Hill! We must hasten back and give the alarm!"

The youths raced through the timber at their best speed. They arrived at the American encampment on Chatterton Hill almost out of breath.

Dick informed Captain Hamilton of the approach of the British.

"Do they are coming, are they?" was the quiet remark; "well, we will arrange to give them a warm reception. At the same time, you two youths ride over to headquarters and inform the commander-in-chief that the British are moving on Chatterton Hill."

Dick and Bob hastened away, and quickly bridled and saddled their horses.

Then, leaping into the saddles, they rode away at a gallop.

A few minutes later they were at the encampment of the American army.

They appeared before the commander-in-chief at once, and informed him that the British were moving to attack the force on Chatterton Hill.

"I will send reinforcements at once!" said General

Washington; "ride back and so inform Captain Hamilton."

"Very well, your excellency," and, saluting, the youths withdrew.

Mounting their horses they set out on the return to Chatterton Hill.

They had gone a quarter of a mile when they heard the rattle of musketry.

"The battle is on!" cried Dick, his handsome face lighting up eagerly.

"And we not there!" said Bob.

They urged their horses to a faster pace.

They were eager to get back and get into the fray.

They were about halfway back when, on turning a corner, they found themselves confronted by a band of redcoats who had ridden out of the timber.

"Surrender!" cried the leader of the redcoats, waving his sword; "surrender, in the name of the king!"

"Never!" cried Dick, and he and Bob drew their pistols.

"Surrender or die!" shouted the redcoat; and then, as the youths made no move to obey, he cried to his men: "Fire!"

The redcoats fired upon the boys, but missed.

Dick and Bob returned the fire, bringing down the leading redcoat.

Then they leaped their horses over the stone wall bordering the road and rode rapidly away across the field.

The redcoats, angered by the fall of their leader, rode after the youths.

They shouted for the fugitives to stop and surrender, but the youths answered with shouts of defiance.

The redcoats fired a volley from their pistols, but the shots were wild, and the bullets did not come anywhere near the youths.

"You'll have to learn to shoot!" called back Dick.

"You couldn't hit a barn!" cried Bob.

The redcoats kept up the chase, and the youths saw that they were being forced out of their course.

If they kept on in the direction they were going, they would be forced around to the rear of the advancing British.

This was what their pursuers wished, no doubt.

The youths began edging back, so as to cut in past the left wing of the British forces advancing on Chatterton Hill.

If they could get between the left wing and the pursuing redcoats, they would be able to reach and rejoin the American forces on the hill.

This they were very anxious to do.



The battle was already commenced, and they wanted to be in it.

They wished to be at the head of their company of "Liberty Boys."

The youths urged their horses to their best speed, and were glad to see that they were succeeding.

They gradually worked their way back toward the road they had left a few minutes before, and presently leaped their horses back over the stone wall.

They were now in the road, and rode more rapidly than ever.

They had to do so if they were to succeed in reaching Chatterton Hill, for the left wing of the British forces was coming rapidly across, and would be dangerously near to the road along which the youths had to pass.

The boys had no fear of their pursuers. They were out of rifle shot behind. It was the advancing left wing that they had to look out for.

By hard riding they succeeded in getting past in safety, though a number of shots were fired at them.

They raced up the side of the hill and were soon on the scene of action.

Their company of "Liberty Boys" were in the front ranks, loading and firing with the regularity and precision of veterans, and Dick and Bob quickly took their place at the head of the company.

The battle which ensued was fierce while it lasted, and resulted in a defeat for the American forces that was in reality a victory. True, they were forced to retire, but they killed two hundred and twenty-nine of the British, while they lost but one hundred and forty.

Of all the patriot soldiers engaged in this battle, none fought more bravely and fiercely than the "Liberty Boys," who seemed determined the redcoats should not reach the top of the hill.

They were the last to retire when the order was given to retreat, and they retired then slowly and in good order.

Dick and Bob managed to secure their horses, and took the animals along with them.

The British attempted to follow the retreating patriots, but were met with such a galling fire that they decided presently that they would let well enough alone, and be content with having captured the hill.

The division that had been forced to retreat from Chatterton Hill joined the main army on the hill one mile away to the north of White Plains, and there were no more engagements that day.

General Howe seemed content to rest easy and ponder the situation.

If he had suffered considerable loss in simply storming

an outpost garrisoned by a small portion of the patriot troops, what would happen to his army if it were to attack the main patriot army in its strong position?

Evidently this was the question that was agitating the mind of the British general.

General Washington had given General Howe a surprise on more than one occasion, and the British general was more than half afraid of the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental army even at this early stage of the war. Later, he became more afraid of General Washington than ever.

The bravery of the "Liberty Boys" in the Chatterton Hill engagement had been noted by all, and the youths were complimented by several of the officers.

The youths listened to the compliments with becoming modesty, and said that they had not done more than their share of the rest.

The contrary was known to be the case, but, of course, the youths were all the more thought of on account of their modesty.

"I don't know what I should do without you two youths to do spy work, and then incite the troops to deeds of valor by your example!" said the commander-in-chief earnestly when conversing with the two next morning; "you are always ready, always on hand."

"We are glad if we are in the right place at the right time, your excellency," said Dick, quietly; "if we have our way, we will always be on hand and in the right place."

"I have no doubt of that," with a smile. "Well, I shall depute you to keep a watch on the British until further orders, and keep me informed regarding their possible probable movements."

"We will do our best, your excellency," said Dick.

Then the youths saluted and withdrew.

"Say, Dick, we will have to be careful that we don't get the big head!" said Bob, with a humorous grimace, as they walked to their quarters; "all this bragging of us up liable to turn our heads, don't you think?"

"We don't dare let it do that, Bob. If we were to get so, we would soon think we were so smart the British couldn't catch us, and then the very first thing we know they would catch us, tight and fast."

"I guess you are right, Dick; as soon as a fellow gets to thinking he is smart, then is when he is the easiest to take in."

The youths set about the task which had been deputed to them.

They put in the day scouting and viewing the action of the British from treetops located at a safe distance from



the British encampment, and in the evening reported to the commander-in-chief.

Next day they did the same, and then the next, and on the third day, when they made their report, they had an interesting one to make:

The British seemed to be making preparations for some important move. The constant stir in the camp during the whole day, and the excitement which seemed to rule, made this evident.

General Washington pondered for several minutes, after having heard the report of the boy spies, and then said:

"It is my belief that they contemplate a night or early morning attack. They outnumber us greatly, and while they might be able to defeat them, I think it a wise move to retire to North Castle, where we will have an impregnable position. Then, if they wish to attack us, well and good."

The commander-in-chief dismissed the youths, with praises for their good work, and as soon as darkness had fallen over all, the patriot army left its position and moved away toward the north. Next morning it had taken up its quarters at North Castle, in a position so strong that General Howe despaired of success should he attempt to storm

it, and he turned his army around and moved down the Hudson to Dobb's Ferry.

This was a threat on Fort Washington, and the move of the British general caused more work for Dick and Bob, the patriot boy spies, and their brave "Liberty Boys."

### THE END.

The next number (5) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' NERVE; OR, NOT AFRAID OF THE KING'S MINIONS," by Harry Moore.

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